RSVP To Founders' Day 2010 Now!

Join us for our annual Alumni celebration on March 20 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. on our campus in Sunnyvale.

Each year alumni, staff and faculty gather to enjoy good food, great conversation, the chance to see old friends and make new ones and acknowledge the achievements of the past year.

Call up your old classmates now and plan to have a mini-reunion. There's plenty of free parking and the campus is close to highway 237 and 101.

Don't miss out on the fun! RSVP now!!

Student Project Makes A Difference
Cogswell College prides itself in providing students with the practical real-world learning opportunities and skills they need to be successful in industry. An innovative spirit is critical in the digital media and engineering industries and Cogswell focuses on preparing students to problem-solve and think as an entrepreneur. Cogswell graduates are unique in their ability to address the needs of society and employers by using a blend of science, technology and art.

**Dean Sala** graduated from Cogswell in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering. He returned to Cogswell and completed his second degree in Electrical Engineering Technology in 2009. He represents what Cogswell's programs are designed to do - enable students to turn their dreams into productive careers.

Following he describes his senior project:

**Briefly describe your project:**

My project is a portable solar powered generator that tucks away into a small brief case. When you open it up, there is a large solar panel inside that can be unfolded to an 80 watt sized solar array. The device includes an AC inverter, 12volt DC power, LED indicators and power switches.

**What was the inspiration behind developing this particular project?**

Well, I have always had a passion for solar energy. I am very fascinated how light can be converted to electricity. But my inspiration comes from long camping trips that my family and I go on every year with friends and where there is no grid power. I have a camper with 12volt batteries and it's a challenge keeping them charged when out in the wilderness. You can start the vehicle's engine to charge the batteries thus producing noise and eating precious fuel. I solved the problem when I installed a solar system I developed. I guess you could call it a mini, off-grid system.
thought why not build a small portable version of this system.

**What challenges did you encounter in bringing it to a marketable stage?**

We are still being challenged with the marketing stage. It is very difficult to know if your product will sell. You get caught up trying to decide whether to purchase more materials, put them together and take a chance that you can sell the product. How many should we make? How do we find customers? How useful is our product really? These are hard questions. I am an engineer not a marketing professional. But I am steadily becoming better at it. Luckily my business partner is better at this then I.

**I understand that the project started as your Cogswell Senior Capstone project. Did you originally plan to sell a product based on the technology?**

Yes, I actually had the product idea before I came back to Cogswell. I guess you can say this was an incentive to finish my second degree. The fact that I had already figured out a lot of the technical details before starting Senior Project I made the process easier but not simple by any means.

**Tell us a little about the company you and your partner have formed and your plans for the future.**

We are now about one year into this. Our company is in the business of providing portable solar power solutions and perhaps solar panels themselves. We can make our own custom high quality solar panels. I think these solar panels are our greatest asset. They are different because they do not use glass. Instead, the panels use a special Teflon front sheet that is better than glass.

For now, we have taken a step back and decided to make a small product to get us off the ground quickly. We are currently producing a small, 5 watt, folding solar USB charger. With special circuitry, we have been able to charge many USB type devices like phones, GPSs, etc, including the iPhone and iPod!

Our big goal is to make small to medium-sized portable solar power generators that could be used for a variety of applications. One of which is disaster preparedness.

**How do you feel running your own company?**

I have been a software engineer for many years working for a big corporation. There have been good and bad times working in the industry. Although, our company has not made any money yet, I am very motivated. Failure is not in my vocabulary. Over the years many colleagues of mine have always discussed new ideas and products that could potentially form a new company. I am finally doing just that and loving it!
Please visit www.suntactics.com for more info on our future products.

Film Festival Update for The Offering

[Images of award certificates including a Rising Star Award, official selection for the Atlanta Film Festival, Beverly Hills Film Festival, and Tupelo Film Festival]
Newport Beach Film Festival Screening Sunday, April 25 at 7:15pm. Michael Huber will be present to discuss the film.

Sundial Film Festival Screening Thursday, March 11 at 8:30pm and Friday, March 12 at 6:00pm. Michael Huber will be present to discuss the film.

LeapFrog Job Openings

LeapFrog has two positions open right now that they asked us to let our Alumni know about. Currently, the company located in Emeryville, is looking for a Director of Design and a Game Designer (open to mid to senior experience levels).

If you are interested in applying, please follow the embedded links.

LINKS:  
Director, Design  
Game Designer

Alumni Notes

Logan Ames (2005) is a Flash/Actionscript Technician for Phoenix Technical Publications and the Web Designer for Sew Beaded Bead Shop. Kaine Apryss (2004) is a Network Engineer at Datanamics in the Las Vegas area. He is moving into the role of a...

Share Your News!